

NEWS RELEASE

Indiana Criminal Justice Institute



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 1, 2008

Governor Proclaims May as Motorcycle Safety and Awareness Month

Indianapolis, IN. – As part of a continuous effort to ensure the safety of everyone on Indiana's roadways, the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute (ICJI) and the Governor's Council on Impaired & Dangerous Driving will join with state, local and federal officials to proclaim May as Motorcycle Safety and Awareness Month. This initiative is supported by a spring billboard campaign that is currently underway in Indiana targeting Marion, Lake, Allen, Tippecanoe, and Elkhart Counties.

"As warmer weather approaches motorists are being urged to exercise caution, common courtesy, and to safely share the road with motorcycles," said ICJI Executive Director, Neil Moore. "Too often in a crash, the drivers of passenger vehicles involved say they never saw the motorcyclist and failed to respond in time. Yet inattentiveness is no excuse - we must all drive and ride defensively in order to prevent unnecessary crashes, injuries and fatalities in our state," Moore added.

According to the Automated Reporting Information Exchange System (ARIES), in 2006, 58.8 percent of all individuals killed in motorcycle collisions in Indiana were reported to have a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.01 or greater. Additionally, the number of alcohol-related collisions involving motorcycles or mopeds in Indiana showed a 10 percent annual average change in 2007 compared to 2006.

"No matter how much a rider has had to drink, by starting that engine, he is putting his life and those of other motorists in jeopardy," said Lafayette Mayor, Tony Roswarski.

While law enforcement efforts have produced great success in reducing automobile deaths in recent years, the number of motorcycle fatalities has consistently increased nationwide over the past decade. In Indiana, the lack of proper motorcycle endorsements of any kind appears to be a factor in many motorcycle crashes. According to the 2007 Indiana Motorcycle Fact Sheet, in 2006, more than one-half of motorcycle operators involved in the most serious crashes were not properly licensed.

"As an avid motorcyclist and crash survivor, I know all too well the importance of sharing the road," said West Lafayette Mayor, John Dennis. "Drivers need to remember that because of their smaller size, motorcyclists are often hidden in a vehicle's blind spot."

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Extra precaution is necessary for motorcyclists as they are much more vulnerable than passenger vehicle drivers in the event of a crash. Research shows that approximately 80 percent of motorcycle crashes injure or kill a motorcycle rider, while only 20 percent of passenger car crashes injure or kill a driver or passenger in their vehicle. By receiving the proper training, wearing the right gear, and never riding while impaired, motorcyclists can help to reduce crash-related fatalities and injuries for all riders.

The Traffic Safety division is responsible for implementing programming designed to reduce the number of people injured and killed each year on Indiana's roadways. The division administers state funds and federal dollars awarded to Indiana from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. In this role, the Traffic Safety division conducts grant management, organizes media campaigns, produces educational/informational materials, and coordinates special enforcement efforts with state and local law enforcement agencies. For more information on motorcycle safety please contact 1.800.497.9979 or visit www.in.gov/cji.

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